

12. (AMENDED) A host cell or microorganism transformed with the vector as defined in Claim 8.

13. (AMENDED) A method for generating the peptide or protein, as defined in Claim 1, comprising inserting a nucleic acid molecule that encodes the peptide or protein into a vector construct that it is capable of being expressed in an appropriate host cell or microorganism, transforming a host cell or microorganism with the vector construct, culturing the transformed host cell or microorganism, and isolating and purifying the resulting peptide or protein product.

14. (AMENDED) A method for producing a purified antibody against the pE2 peptide, as defined in Claim 1, comprising injecting into a non-human mammalian host, an immunologically effective amount of the pE2 peptide, and isolating and purifying the antibody produced.

15. (AMENDED) A purified antibody, or fragment thereof, which has been raised against the pE2 peptide, as defined in Claim 1.

16. (AMENDED) A vaccine composition for immunizing an individual against infection from hepatitis E virus (HEV) comprising the pE2 peptide, as defined in Claim 1, and a pharmacologically acceptable carrier.

20. (AMENDED) A method according to Claim 18, characterized in that the presence of the immunological complex is determined following incubation with an indicator reagent under conditions permitting a reaction to occur.

24. (AMENDED) A diagnostic test kit according to Claim 22, characterized in that the peptide pE2, is immobilized to a solid support.